

159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
 591 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in
 order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very
 ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the
 fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with
 the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
 159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma
 lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt
 queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him,
 and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she
 took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after
 this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He
 asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that
 Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from
 Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the
 earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
 [301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
 435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he
 was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him
 from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and
 each looked as though he was perched on the back of the
 person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and
 distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he
 has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again
 called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was
 gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to
 crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and
 while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the
 house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying
 stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran
 off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later
 on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house,
 where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he
 has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for
 more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
 [787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by
 becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

773 shelter, for he was hungry and tired. There were many huge
539 pigs lying about outside the house, one of which the people
killed and roasted. They also gave him *chi* and rice, which he
had never before tasted. He stayed in Mayel for seven days;
and when he left the people gave him all sorts of grains and
vegetables, at the same time asking him to tell no one what
he had seen. On the way back the pumpkins, cucumbers,
and other vegetables turned into stone; but the rice was
planted and has been cultivated in Lingtem ever since."

* * * * *

439 No food is exported from Jongu, the people growing
merely sufficient to meet their own needs; and to this I think
may partly be attributed their superior physique compared,
for instance, with Lepchas in the Kalimpong and Darjeeling
districts of British India.

243 Rice grown in the hills is of much better quality than that
439 grown in the plains and is in demand all over India. Kalim-
● [435] pong rice, for instance, sells at the present time (July 1937) at
Rs5/4 a maund (approximately eighty pounds), whereas that
grown in the plains can be bought in Kalimpong for Rs3/4 a
maund. The depressing result of this economic factor is that
the town-dwelling Lepcha (and of course the Nepali) is
forced to sell his own rice for export, while himself living on
the inferior plains variety; and there is no doubt that his
physique and general health suffer accordingly.

164 Tuberculosis, for instance, is spreading alarmingly in these
two districts, whereas in Jongu it is at present practically
unknown. From statistics given me by the Tuberculosis
dispensary in Kalimpong it appears that at present the
incidence of this disease is considerably less amongst Lepchas
than amongst the other people; but even amongst them it is
steadily gaining ground. This, as I have already pointed out,
is probably not unconnected with the different living con-
ditions of the two peoples; but a more nourishing diet, such as
the people get in their own natural conditions, would
undoubtedly help towards stamping out the disease.

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must
 [834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from
 the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears
 caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there
 is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common
 in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con-
 [832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall-
 [157] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but
 they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth,
 [844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They
 are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet,
 which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields
 [435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about
 five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and con-
 sidered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other
 most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human
 consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an excep-
 tionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other
 vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself;
 it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough,
 and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart
 from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and
 no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he
 saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in
 reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left
 the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking
 on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when
 the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said;
 "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth.
 From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all
 kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This
 [184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating
 snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago,
 and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

[326] from Mangan or Gangtok, being afterwards fitted with
 [439] wooden handles by their owners. They cost from one to two
 [435] rupees each. I have often seen a Lepcha cut down a bamboo
 as thick as a man's arm with a couple of strokes and a few
 seconds later, using the very same tool, put a point on a
 pencil that would be good enough to draw the finest line.
 Give a Lepcha his *ban* and put him in his own native forest
 and he will make you anything from a house to a wooden
 plate off which to eat your food. With the same one weapon
 he will make you a bow and arrows, and then skin and
 prepare the game. I never ceased to wonder at his skill.

411 There were two ancient matchlocks in Lingtem, one of
 which Palden occasionally borrowed. It was fitted with a
 bipod of antelope horns, and when the fuse was lighted
 usually spluttered for some seconds before going off with a
 deafening bang; but by this time the selected prey had long
 since flown. I would not myself have used it for untold cash;
 [554] but in the eyes of its owner, and perhaps in the rest of the
 village, it was a symbol of progress—a mark of the civilised
 man.

CONCLUSIONS

281

The money-lenders were first established in Mangan about 426
 forty years ago, and for the first ten years or so everyone
 thought it was a great convenience to be able to meet his
 outside requirements on the spot: but now there is no one
 who is not in their debt, for as one of them said to me in
 Mangan: "Sir, these Lepchas are very simple people!"

The Lepcha is, in any case, extremely improvident; but [185]
 owing to the ease with which it is now possible to replenish
 his stock of grain, or to borrow money in Mangan, he never
 considers the question of whether he can afford a feast or
 a bull for a sacrifice. Most people now obtain their
 seed from the money-lenders, in payment for which they
 have to set aside a certain definite proportion of the car-
 damom crop, without regard for what the current rate for
 seed at particular year may eventually be. It makes no differ- [436]
 ence what kind of seed is taken; the repayment is always in
 the form of cardamoms. The people also obtain advances
 in the form of cloth, salt, kerosene oil, and so on. For eighty [435]
 pounds of rice, worth, on an average, say, seven rupees, they
 have to pay back a like weight of cardamoms, which at the
 present time is worth fifteen rupees; but the price fluctuates
 and in the boom years was as high as sixty rupees, but of
 these matters the ignorant Lepcha knows practically nothing.
 Similarly, cloth to the value of ten rupees is paid for [436]
 with eighty pounds of cardamoms. The money-lenders will [435]
 not allow the people to repay their debts in cash, even should
 cash be available, nor will they accept any form of payment
 at the time a transaction takes place, for this would enable
 the people to keep out of their clutches and would be entirely
 contrary to their system of dealing. Should a man be unable
 to liquidate his debt at the time of the cardamom harvest
 interest is charged at the rate of half the principal per
 annum; that is to say, fifty per cent compound interest. The
 interest charged on cash loans is at the rate of six annas in
 the rupee per annum, which works out at thirty-seven and a
 half per cent per annum; but throughout India no man may be
 sent to court for more than twelve per cent. As a matter of

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LEPCHAS, CUSTOMS AND MARRIAGES.

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~~Some~~¹ are supposed to be antidotes against poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a guinea for one such, hardly different from the common sort, which cost but 4d. or 6d. MM. Huc and Gabet graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks, maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora*.

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone, or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its low and sweet tones are singularly *Æolian*, as are the airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman; there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the

¹ [i.e., wooden caps.-Analyst]